

Death

After completing the process of ego-death, individuals consider human experience in a much broader, spiritual framework.

As long as you're alive, you can live however the hell you want to; to give in to what people expect of you is to die before your time.

By inducing ego-death and evolutionary perspectives, psychedelic drugs can counteract the fear of death.

Darkness and death are by no means the mere absence of light and life, but rather their origin.

Death and rebirth experiences are very complex and have biological, emotional and intellectual, as well as philosophical and spiritual facets.

Death is just one episode, one transitional experience within this magnificent perennial drama.

Diane Linkletter's suicide was attributed to acid, although she was not tripping when she killed herself.

Dying persons who had transcendental experiences developed a deep belief in the ultimate unity of all creation. They often experienced themselves as integral parts of it.

Ego death is not permanent, but the break-through to a broader awareness generally begins the process of transformation of the personality.

Experiential sequences of death and rebirth typically open the gate to a transbiographical domain in the human psyche that can best be referred to as transpersonal.

Far from inducing window-jumping and self-destruction, the suicide rate for young people actually dropped during the LSD boom.

Feelings and visions alike became cold and dead in the writing, a faint account giving a prosaic one-hundred-thousandth of the experience itself.

God is not dead; he is alive and close. (He's closer than most people realize. In fact, you can't get away from him.)

If the mechanisms of DNA repair, immunological defense and DNA aging codes can be understood, life can be extended and death postponed indefinitely.

If the religious vigor of a Westerner is enhanced by rich, mystical understanding, this is certainly preferable to a foolish allegiance to a dead faith.

In the Tibetan tradition, dying, no less than living, is to be performed in complete conscious awareness.

In the 20th century, mythology speaks almost a dead language, for the modern mind knows of no order of truth higher than historical fact. Myth is therefore rejected.

It is hard to imagine a more useful way to combine medicine, psychology and religion than psychedelic therapy with dying individuals.

Lacking warmth and drive, many churches and religions have either passed out of existence or have continued in a kind of institutional living death.

LSD subjects can have several sequences of death and rebirth in a single psychedelic session.

Mythology, the repository of a culture's sacred history, reveals the relevance and universal nature of the experience of death and rebirth.

Nothing is higher than these mysteries. They have not only shown us the way to live joyfully, but they have taught us to die with hope.

Of utmost importance is the psychedelic peak experience, which usually takes the form of a death-rebirth sequence with ensuing feelings of cosmic unity.

One theme that is particularly powerful and recurs with remarkable frequency in the mythology of the heroic journey is the encounter with death and subsequent rebirth.

One who has the courage to undergo the shattering of the illusion will die, but will die in the mystical sense, "...so that he may live again." (The ego is the illusion which dies.)

Our mythologies preserve the hint of a way back, to the lost unity, though the price is a form of death.

Powerful experiential sequences of dying and being born can result in dramatic alleviation of a variety of emotional problems.

Psychedelic drug therapy did not die a natural death from loss of interest; it was killed by law. (That is fascism).

Psychedelic substances can induce without any specific programming, profound death-rebirth experiences and facilitate spiritual opening.

The anxiety-laden problem of what will happen to me when I die is like asking what happens to my fist when I open my hand or where my lap goes when I stand up.

The death-rebirth experience can seem to have transcended all boundaries and become a drama involving all of mankind.

The deep psychedelic experience is a death-rebirth flip. You turn on to the ancient rhythm. You become its beat.

The depth and intensity of the death-rebirth experience provides a dramatic framework for the termination of the old social role and the assumption of the new one.

The ego death that precedes rebirth is the death of our old concepts of who we are and what the world is like.

The essential effect of the psychedelic experience is the death of the time-bound ego and the consequent realization of the Supreme Identity.

The experience of death-rebirth is usually so realistic that it is perceived as experientially identical with actual biological demise.

The experience of dying occurs in the context of the death-rebirth experience and total surrender to it is always followed by feelings of liberation.

The experience of ego-death in psychedelic sessions is the most powerful remedy against suicidal tendencies.

The mystical consciousness is so much more deeply rooted than any other human impulse and is characterized by an experience that goes beyond death.

The parallels between the phenomenology of rites of passage and LSD experiences involving death and rebirth are far-reaching.

The perspective of the continuation of life in another form has a very liberating effect on the individual and can considerably alleviate despair and the fear of death.

The Puritans killed the senses. English culture killed emotion. And now it was necessary to dynamite the concrete lid, to “blow the mind” as the LSD followers call it.

The region of death becomes knowable and death itself is seen primarily as a rite of passage to a spiritual mode of being.

The therapeutic effects associated with the experience of death and rebirth are so important.

The very living of any one organism is a perpetual birth, death and elimination of its own cells.

The visionary experience is described in the 7th book of Plato’s Republic and mapped in the Bhgavid Gita and the Tibetan Book of the Dead.

The visionary revelation answers the escape question. There is no death. Ecstatic, mirthful relief.

The ways of liberation propose that what many, perhaps, discover in death may also be discovered in the midst of life.

There’s a plastic film between you and the divine process around you. It’s your egocentricity, your deadening mind.

To be uneasy is the original derivation of the word disease; my anxiety and worry about my certain death was a disease.

Until recently, it was rarely seriously considered that the descriptions of the adventures of the soul after death could reflect experiential reality.

Victory over life and death is won by seeing the oscillating dance of energy and yielding to it.

We have lost the art of playing with our life, the joy has gone out of it. Existence has become an affair of deadly serious.

What really dies in the process of ego-death is that part of us that holds a basically paranoid view of ourselves and of the world around us.

With adequate support and guidance, such episodes can prove to be very beneficial for the dying individual.

Your own consciousness shining, inseparable from the great Body of Radiance, is subject neither to birth nor death.

After the experience of ego death, abuse of alcohol or narcotics, as well as suicidal tendencies, are seen as tragic mistakes due to an unrecognized and misunderstood spiritual craving for transcendence.

Awareness of all normal sense impressions and the empirical ego seems to die or fade away while pure consciousness of what is being experienced paradoxically remains and seems to expand as a vast inner world is encountered.

Clients who experience psychological death-rebirth and/or feelings of cosmic unity tend to develop a negative attitude toward the states of mind induced by alcohol and narcotics. This has proved extremely useful in the treatment of alcoholism and drug addiction.

Creative or revelatory experiences involve a temporary and voluntary breaking up of perceptual constancies, permitting one "to shake free from dead literalism, to re-combine the old familiar elements into, new, imaginative, amusing, or beautiful patterns."

Every initiation into what lies behind the passing show involves an unmasking which is the same thing as the death of the role or identity that one has assumed in the socio-political game.

I became intrigued by the possibilities that LSD psychotherapy seemed to offer for the alleviation of the emotional suffering of cancer patients facing the prospect of imminent death. (That was Stanislav Grof.)

I predict that dying is a merging with the entire life process. In other words, we become every form of life that has ever lived and will live. We become the DNA code that wrote the entire script. Consciousness returns to the genetic code. (That was Timothy Leary.)

In many places of the world and in different historical periods, mythological figures and stories became the central focus of sacred mysteries in which neophytes experienced ritual death and rebirth.

Individuals who experienced the phenomenon of ego death followed by the experience of rebirth and cosmic unity seemed to show radical and lasting changes in their fundamental understanding of human nature and its relation to the universe.

It may be that LSD not only changes the pre-conditions of death, but alters the transition as well. The question is, does it do anything else? No one can answer, for in this realm, there is not a single expert.

It may be that the fear of dying is in part a projected memory of birth and that what Freud called the death instinct is also related to a desire to return to the womb. If the birth agony is experienced as a death agony, this life is in a sense already life after death.

Jung and his followers brought to the attention of Western psychology the utmost significance of all the symbolic variations on the theme of death and rebirth in our archetypal heritage. (This is way beyond what Freud knew, wrote or talked about.)

No authoritarian government, whether ecclesiastical or secular, can tolerate the apprehension that each one of us is God in disguise, and that our real inmost, outmost and utmost Self cannot be killed. That's why they had to do away with Jesus.

Psychedelic research seems to offer a unique approach to the future exploration of the process of ritual transformation. The parallels between LSD sessions and the ritual death-rebirth process are striking.

Some of these persons report that the death-rebirth process seems to have removed a subtle film from their senses which previously prevented them from experiencing reality fully.

Spiritual practice begins by allowing ourselves to die to the ego's ideas about how things should be and to love and accept the truth of things as they are. (The ego doesn't know the meaning of truth.)

Terror at the confrontation with the Divine is natural and instinctive and has been felt by every voyager on the great journey beyond the self. It's the fear of death, the loss of control. (There is no real death and it's the ego that fears, loses control and "dies".)

The concept of human existence as a life-and-death struggle for survival in a world governed by the law of the jungle gives way to a new image of life as a manifestation of a cosmic dance or a divine play.

The "death" which must be undergone to behold the vision of God is the death of a false identity and the withdrawal from the world which is required for liberation is withdrawal from the game that this particular person, so-and-so, is my one and only self.

The institutional Christian churches tell us that Jesus was the only Son of God, that he incarnated as a human in order to die on the cross as a penalty for our sins, and thereby save the world. But that is a sad caricature, a pale reflection of the true story.

The main objective of psychedelic therapy is to create optimal conditions for the subject to experience the ego death and the subsequent transcendence into the so-called psychedelic peak experience.

The mind must be prepared and the conditions right for a profound mystical or religious experience to occur. And even then, the drug user may go through a descent into torment and even a seeming death agony before attaining joyous unity and rebirth.

The most beautiful emotion we can experience is the mystical. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger is as good as dead. (That was Albert Einstein. That's right, Albert Einstein.)

The participation of archetypal elements in the death-rebirth process reflects the fact that deep experiential confrontation with the phenomena of death and birth typically results in a spiritual and mystical opening and mediates access to the transpersonal realm.

The possibility of consciousness after death was rejected not because it contradicted clinical observations, but because the concept was incompatible with existing scientific theories.

The presupposition that one's own religion is, even without examining others, the best and truest of all is stupidity. Science, too, has a mythological level, which is the fiercely held position that the physical universe, outside man, is dead and stupid.

The sage often appears to be an idiot or “wildman” because he doesn’t take the choosing seriously. It’s not life or death. It’s life and death and ultimately, there is nothing to be dreaded. There is nothing outside the universe, against which it can crash.

The wide historical and geographical distribution of transformative rituals focusing on death and rebirth and their psychological relevance for individuals, groups, and entire cultures suggest that they must reflect important basic needs inherent in human nature.

There is no doubt that a genuine comprehension of religion, mysticism, shamanism, rites of passage or mythology is impossible without intimate knowledge of the death experience and the death-rebirth process.

Those individuals who have faced death and rebirth in their sessions show specific changes in their perception of themselves and the world, in their hierarchies of values, general behavior, and overall world-view.

Unusual states of consciousness, similar to those produced by LSD, occur spontaneously in many dying individuals for reasons of a physiological, biochemical, and psychological nature.

What can be done to prevent the glory and the freshness from fading into the light of common day? How can we educate children on the conceptual level without killing their capacity for intense nonverbal experience?

Death is the point at which man escapes the time barrier of the conscious mind. Life does not begin and does not end. We speak of it in this way because the conscious mind can only express itself in terms of time and space. But this end, this event called death, is not all. And if there is something after death then there had to be something before birth.

If the history of science teaches us anything, it is that uncomfortable data cannot be swept under the rug indefinitely. Galileo, we know, was not silenced; his manuscripts were smuggled out and published after his death, laying the groundwork not just for the science of astronomy, but for experimental physics in general.

It is one of the oldest and most universal practices for the initiate to go through the experience of death before he can be spiritually reborn. Symbolically he must die to his past, and to his old ego, before he can take his place in the new spiritual life into which he has been initiated.

It is only when the person begins to return, begins to be reborn, that he becomes upset by death and dying. In the earlier phase, when he really is dead, merged with infinite oneness, there is no concern, only peace. (“Really is dead” means that the ego is dead and if the ego is dead, then there really is peace.)

Jesus had to die because he broke through the frontiers of consciousness, because he broke through what it means to be religious. (Even in today’s “modern” and “civilized” world, anyone who encourages others to be religious by expanding their consciousness is likely to be jailed if not murdered.)

Kent St. University was the scene of a slaughter. The National Guard fired their rifles into a group of antiwar demonstrators and killed four students and wounded thirty. It was the beginning of the end of the dream of peace and love and equality. We realized that our own fathers would kill us.

Leary once remarked that people who believe that LSD should be illegal because some users have committed suicide, maybe because of it, should agitate even more heatedly for the abolition of examinations. Statistics show that the link between final exams and suicide is true beyond any doubt. Every year the college suicide rate rises at exam time.

Often, there is an actual experience of truths, they are KNOWN to be truths, which, when presented in conceptual terms to the mind in its normal state, seem incomprehensible and absurd. Such propositions as “God is love” are realized with the totality of one’s being and their truth seems self-evident in spite of pain and death.

Psychology, man’s view of his nature, is always the last to adapt to a new world view. From the standpoint of established values, the psychedelic process is dangerous and insane—a deliberate psychotization, a suicidal undoing of the equilibrium man should be striving for.

The death-rebirth cycle has been recognized as a natural and lawful pattern throughout our history by many cultures. Just as spring reliably follows winter year after year, so the development of a new life automatically follows a full experience of the destruction of the old.

The therapeutic results transcended anything I had ever witnessed. Difficult symptoms that had resisted months and even years of conventional treatment often disappeared after experiences such as psychological death and rebirth, feelings of cosmic unity and sequences that clients described as past-life memories.

The thought of death does not in the least disturb me, because I am firmly convinced that our spirit is altogether indestructible and thus continues from eternity to eternity. It is like the sun, which to our eyes seems to disappear beyond the horizon, while in actual fact it goes on shining continuously.

Under appropriate conditions the psychedelics could considerably speed and facilitate the process of working through psychological blocks. Material inaccessible in an ordinary state could be brought into awareness, sometimes producing dramatic transformations including death/rebirth experiences and alleviation of symptoms.

When Western science dismissed the concept of consciousness after death as a fabrication based on wishful thinking and superstition, this judgment was not based on the careful study of the area in question that is otherwise characteristic of the scientific approach.

While the religious establishment worries itself into reams of cross arguments on whether or not God is dead, these thinkers merely smile and shake their heads. God isn’t dead; He isn’t even lost. He is right there in the deepest recesses of the mind where he has always been. Doubting Thomases need only allow LSD to show them the way.

A new and exciting area was discovered for psychedelic psychotherapy: the care of patients with terminal cancer and some other incurable diseases. Studies of dying individuals indicated that this approach was able to bring not only alleviation of the emotional suffering and relief from severe physical pain associated with cancer, but also dramatically transform the concept of death and change the attitude toward dying.

Elements of plant consciousness can be accompanied by philosophical and spiritual ideation and insights. Several subjects, for example, have pondered over the purity and unselfishness of plant existence and have seen plant life as a model for ideal human conduct; unlike animals and man, most plants do not kill and do not live at the expense of other organisms.

Exploration of the potential of these substances for the study of schizophrenia, for didactic reasons, for a deeper understanding of art and religion, for personality diagnostics and the therapy of emotional disorders and for altering the experience of dying has been my major professional interest throughout these years and has consumed most of the time I have spent in psychiatric research. (That was Stanislav Grof.)

How many of us now realize that space is the same as mind or consciousness? That your inside goes with your entire outside as your front with your back? That this galaxy and all other galaxies are just as much you as your heart or your brain? That your coming and going, your waking and sleeping, your birth and your death are exactly the same kind of rhythmic phenomena as the stars and their surrounding darkness?

If the intellect by nature cannot understand life, it follows that the intellect by nature cannot understand death. Its view of death results from the fact that it looks only at the parts, not the Whole. If it would look at the Whole, it would see immediately that life is immortal. The esoteric doctrine would be that it is precisely our insistence on personal immortality which makes us blind to our actual immortality.

In many traditions, the notion of “dying before dying” is essential to spiritual advancement. Coming to terms with the fact of death as part of the continuity of life is seen as tremendously liberating, releasing one from the fear of death and opening one to the experience of immortality. As the 17th century Christian monk, Abraham a Santa Clara wrote: “A man who dies before he dies does not die when he dies.”

In most preindustrial societies and ancient civilizations, there have existed powerful rituals designed to transform and consecrate individuals, groups, or even entire cultures. These transformative events, termed rites of passage by anthropologists, are of fundamental importance to the discussion of the experience of symbolic death and rebirth.

It has been shown that LSD experiences of death and rebirth and mystical states of consciousness can change patients’ concepts of death and life and alleviate their fears of dying. Psychedelic therapy has proved to be more than an important tool in the control of mental and physical pain, it has contributed greatly to our understanding of the experience of death.

Leary had always talked about the deadening effect of the “adjust or else” brand of psychology that had held sway over the 1950’s, but he hadn’t realized just how dead in the water most of his colleagues were until he offered them psilocybin and they refused to try it. My God, these were psychologists yet they lacked the slightest curiosity about their own unconscious!

Loss of self may be experienced as an actual death and rebirth, undergone with anguish and joy of overwhelming intensity. In some cases, the culmination is a mystical ecstasy in which for an eternal moment all contradictions seem reconciled, all questions answered,

all wants irrelevant or satisfied, all existence encompassed by an experience that is felt to define the ultimate reality, boundless, timeless, and ineffable.

The average Westerner is naive about nonordinary states of consciousness and has many misconceptions and prejudices about some of the experiences that are potentially the most healing. We try to convey a clear message that such phenomena as death-rebirth sequences, archetypal visions and states of cosmic unity are absolutely normal and that having them in no way implies pathology.

The everyday clinical practice of LSD psychotherapy brings repeated evidence of the powerful healing potential of the death-rebirth process. The discovery of this potent therapeutic mechanism, as yet unrecognized and unacknowledged by Western science, represents one of the most surprising findings of my LSD research. (That was Stanislav Grof.)

The findings from psychedelic explorations throw entirely new light on the material from history, comparative religion and anthropology concerning the ancient mysteries of death and rebirth, rites of passage of various cultures, shamanic procedures of all times, aboriginal healing ceremonies, spiritual practices of various religious and mystical traditions and other phenomena of great cultural significance.

The most human thing about man is his eternal, childlike hope that somehow, someday, the deepest yearnings of his heart will come true. Who is so proud and unfeeling that he will not admit that he would be deliriously happy if, by some strange magic, these deep and ingrained longings could be fulfilled? If there was eternal everlasting life beyond death after all?

The mystics continuously get in trouble with religious authorities, but often also with political authorities. By his teaching and by the very way he lives, Jesus appeals to common sense and blows the pretense of public opinion to pieces. Common people said, "Wow, this man speaks with authority, not like our authorities." You can imagine how the authorities felt about it and how they reacted: "This man has to die!"

The process I was witnessing in others and experiencing myself had a deep similarity with shamanic initiations, rites of passage of various cultures, and the ancient mysteries of death and rebirth. Western scientists had ridiculed and rejected these sophisticated procedures, believing that they had successfully replaced them with rational and scientifically sound approaches.

Those who were previously convinced that death was the ultimate defeat and meant the end of any form of existence discovered various alternatives to this materialistic and pragmatic point of view. They came to realize how little conclusive evidence there is for any authoritative opinion in this matter and often began seeing death and dying as a cosmic voyage into the unknown.

Under the influence of Freudian psychoanalysis, the concept of the ego is associated with one's ability to test reality and to function adequately in everyday life. Individuals who share this limited point of view see the perspective of the ego death with horror. However, what actually dies in this process is a basically paranoid attitude toward the world.

Each person will become his own Buddha, his own Einstein, his own Galileo. Instead of relying on canned, static, dead knowledge passed on from other symbol producers, he will be using his span of 80 or so years on this planet to live out every possibility of the human, prehuman and even subhuman adventure. As more respect and time are diverted to these explorations, he will be less hung-up on trivial, external pastimes. (That was Timothy Leary.)

The richness of the experiential content is augmented by the fact that the process involves an endless variety of illustrative material from biology, zoology, anthropology, history, mythology and religion. Psychedelic sessions focusing on the death-rebirth process not only have great therapeutic potential, but are a source of invaluable scientific, sociopolitical, philosophical and spiritual insights. (That material is seen with the eyes closed.)

The thing that most aroused my interest was the tone and contents of what my classmates who had taken the drug were saying. They talked to each other in stunned, excited voices about love, sharing, identity, unity, death, ecstasy—topics not generally discussed by psychology students except with cynical flippancy or heavy academic seriousness—but certainly never from experienced confrontation, as was happening now. (That was Ralph Metzner.)

An understanding of death is the key to liberation in life.

Biological death is the beginning of an adventure in consciousness.

Church religion is spiritually dead.

Death is the ultimate equalizer.

“Die and come to life”.

He not busy being born is busy dying. (That was Bob Dylan.)

Heaven need not wait for the grave.

I don't really fear death because I feel like I experienced it.

Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.

Life is a position of time. Death is a position of time. They are like winter and spring.

Loss of ego may be confused with physical death.

Nothing dies, it merely moves into another manifestation of the whole.

Only the body dies and the Self is eternal.

Perhaps what they call living is really dying and dying is our liberation into true life.

Psychedelic drug therapy was killed by the law.

Suffering and death are problematic for the ego rather than the organism.

The experiences of death and rebirth are very rich and complex.

The person is “dead”, yet can think and answer questions.

The real self exists on after the death of the body.

The sequences of dying and being born or reborn are frequently very dramatic.

The state of mind associated with dying can be experienced during life.

There is a touch of death, a preparation for the big one.

There is no death, his true self being as eternal as the universe.

We die, creatively speaking, when we cling too fast to the definite.

We have to realize that we are as deeply afraid to live and to love as we are to die.

What death negates is not the individual, not the organism/ environment, but the ego.

What dies is not consciousness but memory.

You don't die because you were never born. You had just forgotten who you are.

The world is not static and dead. It's now a shimmering dance of living energy. All solidity is gone.

He stands outside of and apart from his familiar ego, all its protective barriers having been shed; and this can lead in some to transcendent experience, while in others to a deep panic. To those for whom the ego is their only possible self, the only possible mode of consciousness, its disappearance is a kind of death.

Emotionally I experienced death and birth as similar events, two ends of the same continuum and therefore to be similarly interpreted.

Following the ego death, individuals saw human experience in a much broader spiritual framework.

He felt that if he could die right then, he could keep the tremendous beauty and rich emotions for himself throughout eternity.

He saw eternal cycles of life and death unfolding in front of his eyes. Nothing really got destroyed; everything was in eternal flux and transformation.

He was seeing life as an endless sequence of cycles in which becoming, being, and perishing were just chapters in the same great book.

I knew that my Self outlasts physical death and that my essence, the me that is eternal, exists without form.

I realized that I was dead and that I was in the place which is the aboriginal base of all existence.

I saw that the universe is not composed of dead matter, but is on the contrary, a living Presence. I became conscious in myself of eternal life.

I thought that I was near death; when suddenly, my soul became aware of God, in an intense present reality. I felt him. I cannot describe the ecstasy I felt.

I was dead and yet I was never more joyously alive; thus I knew that after death, the soul is more alive than we can ever be while living (without LSD).

It was time for the old mind to die, so that a new one, with expanded sensibilities, could be born.

The drug experience seemed to reduce depression, tension, pain and fear of death dramatically.

The psychological power of his new spiritual vision was so great that it helped overcome his excessive fear of death.

The Shaman lost all fear of death, knowing it to be literally impossible. "Man has created death."

Within the domains of visionary travel, I'd now gone all the way toward the beginning, to my conception, and all the way toward the end, to my death.

Death, instead of being the ultimate end of everything, suddenly appeared as a transition into a different type of existence; the idea of the possible continuity of consciousness beyond physical death seemed to be much more plausible than the opposite.

I felt that two people who really love can never be separated, not by space or time or eternity. The lines of the marriage ceremony “till death do us part” seemed utterly ridiculous. (The writer wrote it as “till death us to part.”)

Seemingly, some element of my former personality had died, but some other part that was far more vital had been reborn. Whatever it was that wanted to come to life was important, but I didn't yet know how or why.

I felt that I was part of some intricate, unified network that was all-inclusive and eternal and I felt that in that place I would continue to exist in some form forever. My belief in the finality of death was undermined by an event that was so real it could not be denied and I could no longer believe that death was the end of everything.

I looked on fields, and waters, and sky, and read in them a most startling meaning. I wondered how I had ever regarded them in the light of dead matter. They were now grand symbols of the sublimest spiritual truths—truths never before even feebly grasped, and utterly unsuspected.

I now felt I had had some direct experience of the ineffable realms of union with God, and I discovered that my dissatisfaction with conventional religion was not due to the death of God, as some theologians proclaimed, but rather to the impoverished concepts of God, currently in vogue.

I was not I any more but a consciousness that encompassed a vastly broader spectrum than I ever dreamed of. It doesn't last, but once you have known it, you can never forget that it exists. When the experience becomes integrated into your life, the fear of death disappears— and we can only truly begin to live when we no longer fear death.

In a letter to Humphrey Osmond, Aldous Huxley described a mescaline experience, during which he came to the conclusion that “I didn't think I should mind dying, for dying must be like this, a passage from the known, constituted by lifelong habits of subject-object-existence, to the unknown cosmic fact.”

It was a beautiful feeling, a verification of what I hoped would be the ultimate truth and a hopeful view of creation: Don't worry about your body or about dying. That's an illusion. Consciousness cannot die. To me, this was mind-shattering, the ultimate revelation in my life.

My familiar reality had cracked; a vast new reality that promised liberation from death and meaninglessness lay before me. I believed that if everybody saw what I now saw there would be peace on earth. The demons of hate, violence, illness and war would be banished back into Pandora's box. The scales would fall from humanity's eyes and we would recognize that we are one, and that we are eternal.

When I realized that I was being born again, that life goes on and on and on, the feeling was overwhelming. I was filled with confidence that it was okay to die, because the consciousness that inhabits the flesh has a higher destiny. It never began and it won't end.

It just keeps going. Then I was struck with wave after wave of value wisdom, as though the forms behind human spirituality were hitting me for the first time.

All patients, said Grof, apparently moved through similar levels during their sessions. They passed first through aspects of their own life experiences—birth, childhood, adulthood—and then into experiential realms described in mystical traditions, experiences of ego-death and rebirth followed by “satori”—the dissolution of ego-boundaries and the loss of duality, an unfolding awareness of cosmic unity, a sense of Oneness.

Being dead was not a problem. I was happy to spend eternity in this state.

I felt like I might come to heaven if I die...I was there.

I had a palpable intuitive sense of life after death.

The days of my life had been mostly death! Was I now alive?

The universe was experienced as living and not a dead machine.

a profound mystical or religious experience involving elements of death and rebirth, cosmic unity or communication with God

a radiance that seemed comparable to the light of super-natural brilliance that according to Oriental scriptures appears to us at the moment of death

an existence of peace and equanimity, a state of well-being and wholeness—transcending all fear of death

an extremely realistic feeling of the ultimate biological crisis that frequently gets confused with real dying

an immediate awareness of things as they live and move, as distinct from the mere grasp of ideas and feelings about things which are the dead symbols of a living reality

becomes open to the possibility that consciousness might be independent of the physical body and continue beyond the moment of clinical death

instilling a sense of meaning in his personal existence and a feeling that since there is meaning in life, there is meaning in death

my central sense of identity, which springs directly from the heart of reality and is not subject to birth or death

not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, where death was an almost laughable impossibility

reported that their previous suicidal tendencies had actually been unrecognized cravings for the ego-death and transcendence

sequences of psychological death and rebirth, encounters with archetypal beings, visits to mythological realms of various cultures (eyes closed)

that at least for some cancer patients, LSD psychotherapy could become a factor contributing to healing and not only a preparation for death

the administration of LSD to terminal cancer cases, make dying a more spiritual, less strictly physiological process

the better minds of our age who believe in all sincerity that institutional Christianity is a dead backwater and the multitudes simply follow their opinion

the dead posturing of robot actors on the fake-prop TV studio stage set that is called American reality

the fear that death will take us into everlasting nothingness, like being buried alive forever, darkness without end—as if that could be some sort of experience

the parallels between LSD sessions and esoteric procedures focusing on the death experience

the unfolding possibilities of mind-free consciousness, the liberating effect of the ancient rebirth process that comes only through the death of the mind

a dramatic shift in our value system, from the emphasis on mechanical prolongation of life to concern about the quality of dying and death (This refers to people who are really dying and take LSD. It is also related to the assisted-suicide issue.)

direct spiritual experiences, such as feelings of cosmic unity, a sense of divine energy streaming through the body, death-rebirth sequences, encounters with archetypal entities, visions of light of supernatural beauty

experiences of a world transfigured into unimaginable loveliness, charged with intrinsic significance and manifesting, in spite of pain and death, an essential and divine All-Rightness

prepare the individual for eventual biological death by establishing a deep, almost cellular awareness that periods of destruction are those of transition rather than termination

the liberated soul who takes on in the spirit of play the task, which others view as a matter of life or death. (The liberated one knows that it's life and death or life-death-life-death, not life or death.)

assertions of having known the origin and goal of history, of having found the answer to the ancient query, "What am I?", of having intuited the harmonious structure of the universe, of having experienced the primacy of love and the brotherhood of man, or of having realized the reality of life that transcends temporal death

a deeper understanding of the death-rebirth process

a key to the great mysteries of life and death

a mystical transcendental, death-rebirth experience

After-Death, where there is a survival of consciousness, but not of the body as we know it

death a continuation of what had been the hidden aspect of the experience of life

death the transformation and renewal of life, the shuffling of the pack for a new deal

dying into purer being

grateful to be dead—grateful to have been shown the truth

liberated while still in his individual form, before the death of the body

Life in Death

ritual death and rebirth

that death is a change of scene

that death is not the end of consciousness but rather an extension of it

the attainment of the mystical vision through “ego death”
the consciousness-expansion experience—the pre-mortem death and rebirth rite
the culminating experience of a lifetime, man’s redemption from death
the discovery that nothing is really dead
the ecstatic death-and-rebirth experience
the experience of death and rebirth, union with the universe or God
the experience of psychological death
the liberating ego death
the opportunity to experience death without actually dying
the purity and exquisite life and light within death
the recognition of life in death
the rich and complex phenomena of the psychedelic death-rebirth process
the therapeutic significance of the ego death and rebirth experience
this shocking encounter with the phenomenon of death
to kill that greedy old Self (the ego)
to understand that death is false and that life is immortal
whether a suicidal individual can satisfy his “need to die” by “dying” in a drug session